

Senate Bill 43
March 15, 2011
Presented by Art Noonan
House Fish, Wildlife and Parks Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, I am Art Noonan, Deputy Director of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP). I am here in support of Senate Bill 43.

This bill started in the Senate and is mostly fixed. This bill has some history to it, but we are close to getting it right.

One theory behind establishing primitive parks was to not pay fees in certain state parks back when the division had a day use fee. That theory is worn out because now we have the vehicle registration and Montana citizens don't have to pay entrance fees.

Another theory behind this bill was that state parks will be overdeveloped. State parks are not overdeveloped. In fact some parks are not meeting public demand for service. This is challenging citizens and staff, while disturbing adjacent landowners.

We need the ability to expand the law so that boat docks can be installed to avoid hull damage on boats, where appropriate, volunteer host pads can be built to reduce vandalism and the threat of wildfire, and we can consider trails for equestrian use or biking with commission approval - instead of just hiking. Finally, we do need to cut timber, if necessary, for fire suppression or disease management.

This law restricts park management for unnecessary reasons, forces staff to reduce public services that are reasonable, and ties the hands of the agency in helping reduce the impacts to adjacent landowners.

Please support SB43.